



MINUTES OF THE Edina Transportation Commission

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Edina City Hall
4801 West 50th Street
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jennifer Janovy, Paul Nelson, Michael Schroeder, Tom Bonneville, Jean White, Geof Workinger

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Nathan Franzen, Josh Sprague

STAFF PRESENT:

Jack Sullivan, Sharon Allison

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called order by chair Janovy.

II. Introduction of City Manager Scott Neal

New city manager Scott Neal introduced himself and gave a brief work history. He said he is touring facilities and meeting co-workers. He was asked if there were any transportation issues on his list of things to do. He said no but that he was involved with the TH-169 & TH-494 issues while at Eden Prairie. He was also asked how the Transportation Commission functions at Eden Prairie and he said they did not have one.

III. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting of October 21, 2010

The first sentence of the last paragraph on page two was edited to read "...about the France Avenue Bridge over crosstown..." Commissioner Bonneville motioned to approve the minutes with the addition and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Nelson.

IV. Consent Agenda

- a. Traffic Safety Report for October 6, 2010
- b. Traffic Safety Report for November 3, 2010

No comment.

V. Community Business

Resident David Davison showed Mn/DOT's 2030 rail map plan that has 10 corridors, including the Twin Cities-Mankato corridor with one line running through Edina (formerly known as a the Dan Patch line and now named MN&S line). He said the plan calls for building by the year 2030 with 5-6 long, fast, heavy trains per day, traveling at 80 mph with stations five miles apart. He suggested the Cahill line as a cost saving measure and as an option for relieving the

commuter rail along the MN&S fork of the Twin Cities-Mankato Corridor.” He said they are taking comment until December 23.

Assistant city engineer Sullivan said staff will be reporting to the Council and the ETC in late December regarding this topic and will also include information on what is happening in St. Louis Park with their rail line.

VI. New Business

a. Richfield Traffic Control Request

City of Richfield’s city engineer Jeff Pearson, said the city of Richfield is requesting permission to install stop signs at 75th & Xerxes and York Terrace & Xerxes because of the new bike lanes and also because of their new stop sign policy that calls for stop signs on north/south avenues. Mr. Sullivan explained that the request was first presented to the Traffic Safety Committee but was denied for lack of warrants and Council requested that the ETC review the request and make a recommendation.

During discussion, staff was asked if this was a good idea and Mr. Sullivan said considering the city of Richfield’s stop sign policy, the bike lanes and the trail system, that this would be a positive measure. Commissioner Schroeder noted that Edina’s stop sign policy has no accommodation for bicycles and pedestrians and said they should be adjusted to include them.

Commissioner Nelson motioned to approve the request as presented by the city of Richfield and the motion was seconded by Commissioner White.

b. Whole Foods Transportation Study

Assistant city engineer Sullivan said developers are proposing to tear down the 35,000 sq. ft. building at 7401 France Avenue and replace it with a 32,000 sq. ft. building with a similar foot print to house Whole Foods, a grocery store.

Mr. Sullivan said the traffic study objectives were to 1) document traffic operations under existing operating conditions; 2) assess future traffic conditions if the project does not proceed; 3) analyze future operations if the redevelopment proceeds as planned; and 4) assess the impact of the redevelopment and recommend mitigation measures if needed; and they were asked to look at the following intersections: France Avenue at Parklawn, Plaza Drive, and 76th Street; Parklawn Avenue at Centennial Lakes; 76th Street at Centennial Lakes; and two Plaza Drive internal intersections.

Mr. Sullivan said the study analysis shows the following: reconstruction will add 2100 daily trips with 145 trips in the PM peak hour and 133 in the Saturday peak hour; intersections will operate at acceptable level of service C or better; however, some measurements are at E; access locations to remain the same; and no improvements to the local street network are recommended. Additionally, he said a new sidewalk with a crosswalk and bike racks are included in the project and that the store is along Metro Transit’s route 6 bus line.

Mr. Sullivan said staff recommends approval and asked that the ETC *“adopt a motion recommending that the traffic as demonstrated in the transportation study for Whole foods –*

Discussion ensued and Commissioner Nelson asked if the construction to the north was taken into consideration. Mr. Sullivan said yes, and that the developers' traffic consultant was given a computerized base model to do the traffic study.

Commissioner Bonneville noted that the access on Plaza Drive that connects the adjoining parking lots is below grade and unsafe. He suggested stop signs to make it safer. Mr. Sullivan said site circulation will be reviewed by City Engineer Houle and the Planning Commission. Commissioner Bonneville also said he believes vehicles will stack on Parklawn Avenue.

Nick Erpelding with Westwood Professional Services, said majority of traffic is expected to access from Parklawn Avenue and they reviewed cueing on Parklawn and found no adverse effects from vehicles passing through the intersection.

Commissioner Janovy said she is concerned that the north entrance will be used by delivery trucks and customers and asked if there will be a conflict. Mr. Bruce Carlson, development director with Mid-America Real Estate, said they have gone over truck movements many times and feel that they have a good design. He said most deliveries will be in the mornings and will be minimal at 4-5 per day.

Commissioner Bonneville said the nose of the center median on Parklawn Avenue will need to be cut back for trucks to make left turns. Mr. Sullivan said staff questioned this earlier on but all of the templates that they've looked at shows trucks will be able to maneuver around the median and the issue can be revisited if needed.

Commissioner Schroeder asked if they took into account the number of drivers going south who may leave to the north thereby creating more traffic on Parklawn Avenue instead of W. 76th Street. Mr. Erpelding said they did take this into account and they did factor in most of the traffic exiting via Parklawn Avenue.

Commissioner Bonneville inquired about parking ratio and Mr. Sullivan said parking review will be looked at by the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Schroeder motioned "that the traffic as demonstrated in the [traffic impact analysis] for Whole Foods – Centennial Lakes does not adversely affect the adjacent transportation system." The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nelson.

Aye: Schroeder, White, Janovy, Nelson, Workinger

Nay: Bonneville

Motion carried.

c. Complete Street – Jack Broz

Mr. Sullivan introduced Jack Broz with Howard R. Green. He said Mr. Broz represents one of many companies that have been working on developing Complete Streets which is now state statute and that after the City Engineers Association of Minnesota winter conference in January, staff will have something more defined to present.

Mr. Broz said he is a transportation engineer and most recently he has been participating in

Mr. Broz talked about the historical perspective of the interstate system and how it has shaped the future. He said the mission of the interstate system was to move faster and most design standards have followed this pattern of wider, faster, flatter, straighter, and cost was not an issue. He said studies show that the faster you are driving, the likelihood that an accident will result in a fatality. For design purposes, he said engineers generally forecast out 20 years and vehicle level of service is typically designed for a small percentage of traffic when you eliminate things like rush hour and mid-week traffic. He said this leads to intersections like the one at Best Buy in Richfield with wide open streets. He said this design required a lot of money, right-of-way had to be acquired and pedestrian crossing is difficult. In a photo illustration, he pointed to a car making a right turn, coming upon the crosswalk and asked if the driver is paying attention to the crosswalk or oncoming traffic as he attempts his turn. He said the only consideration given in this design was to get vehicles more efficiently to Best Buy while other modes of transportation are secondary.

Continuing, Mr. Broz said with Complete Streets, they are looking to put back what was there such as the ability to walk and chose your mode of transportation and doing so at a time when funds are no longer unlimited. The definition of Complete Streets, he said, is safe access for all users of all ages and abilities...motorists, transit users, pedestrians and bicyclists can move safely along and across complete streets. An example of a complete street, he said, would be to redesign a 4-lane road that has a sidewalk into a 4-lane road with sidewalk, bike lanes and green space. To accommodate all modes he said all users should receive attention in the design process for all projects. He said many decisions must be made early in the planning and design process with an understanding of mobility and speed (travel, circulation and access); however, many detailed design issues arise later in the design process.

Mr. Broz said there are indications that things are changing as illustrated in the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual, which, for the first time in 50 years will include a multi-level mode of service. He said design must be done with all of the varied characteristics in mind – transit, bicyclists (commuters, recreational riders, etc), pedestrians (older, children, persons with disability, etc). He also said understanding maintenance for all modes of transportation is important, example, more frequent sweeping of streets to accommodate bicyclists, removal of snow, etc.

During discussion Mr. Broz was asked about similar cities to Edina that would be good models to follow. He referred the ETC to the MN Complete Streets Coalition website as a good resource.

VII. Planning Commission Update (Commissioner Schroeder)

Commissioner Schroeder said they continue to work on the same issues as last month.

VIII. Bike Edina Task Force Update (Commissioner Janovy)

a. October 14, 3010 Meeting Minutes

Chair Janovy said they had a visit from Mr. Bill Dossett, executive director of Nice Ride (the green bikes in downtown Minneapolis) and they are looking to expand to either 44th & France or 50th & France.

earlier conversation that Commissioner Bonneville had mentioned discussing restriping of 76th Street at a future meeting.

Commissioner Nelson said he attended a tour of the station locations for the Southwest LRT and brought back informational handouts which he gave to Mr. Sullivan. He said public meetings are scheduled for station area planning. For more information go to www.southwesttransitway.org.

Commissioner Workinger noted that the City has an email subscription service that anyone can sign up for and receive notice on a variety of topics, including the W. 70th Street: France to TH-100 project.

X. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned.